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Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

Summary record of the 451st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 26 July 2005, at 3 p.m.

Temporary Chairman: Mr. Chidumo (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Mozambique)
Chairman: Mr. Kariyawasam ..... (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary Chairman** declared the 2005 session open.

Election of the Chairman

2. **The Temporary Chairman** said that the delegation of Sri Lanka had agreed to continue to provide the Chairman of the Committee and had nominated Ambassador Kariyawasam for that post. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to elect Ambassador Kariyawasam Chairman.

3. *Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka) was elected Chairman by acclamation.*

4. *Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.*

Election of other officers

5. **The Chairman** said he had been informed that the delegations of Australia and Indonesia would be willing to continue to provide Vice-Chairmen. In keeping with the decisions to revitalize and improve the efficiency of the General Assembly, he took it that the Committee wished to dispense with the nomination procedure and proceed to elect the Vice-Chairmen.

6. *Mr. Milton (Australia) and Mr. Tugio (Indonesia) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.*

7. **The Chairman** said that Ambassador Chidumo of Mozambique had agreed to continue as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Randrianarivony of Madagascar as Rapporteur.

Adoption of the agenda

8. **The Chairman** drew attention to the provisional agenda for the session, contained in document A/AC.159/L.135. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it.

9. *The agenda was adopted.*

Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 58/29 of 8 December 2003

10. **The Chairman** said that by its resolution 58/29 of 8 December 2003, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace", the General Assembly had requested him to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report through the Committee to the Assembly at its sixtieth session.

11. Although the Committee had not reached agreement on the manner of implementation of the Declaration, its objectives and vision remained valid. Since the adoption of the Declaration, the world situation had changed significantly, notably with the end of the super-Power rivalry that had prevailed in the Indian Ocean region during the cold war. Moreover, new security imperatives and new cooperative mechanisms were developing. New threats, including terrorism, were affecting regional stability and security, and efforts to achieve disarmament and arms control in the region had faltered.

12. The ongoing United Nations reform process offered an opportunity to explore a new approach to the Committee's work. It might even prove necessary to revise the Declaration in order to bring it into line with current realities, perhaps on the basis of the proposals made by the Committee at its 1993 and 1994 sessions.

13. Aware that the General Assembly favoured participation in the Committee's work by all five permanent members of the Security Council and by the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, he had contacted three permanent members — France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America — to enquire about their possible return to the Committee. However, they had informed him that their position of non-participation remained unchanged.

14. In view of the complexities and difficulties in implementing the Declaration, further time would be needed before the Committee could discuss practical measures for ensuring peace and stability in the Indian Ocean. However, the Bureau could conduct informal consultations with a view to making proposals for increasing the Committee's usefulness as a United Nations body. The Committee might also wish to recommend to the General Assembly that it should allow further time for consultations regarding how measures envisaged in the Declaration might be considered in a more focused manner.

15. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia) said that the Committee should pursue and intensify its efforts to assure the renewed participation in its work of the five permanent

members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean. The international community was becoming increasingly aware of the need to develop a practical framework for interregional cooperation in various parts of the world. There was enormous potential for such cooperation in the Indian Ocean, and the Committee's task would be both to facilitate such cooperation and to contribute to it in a concrete and substantive manner.

16. The tragic consequences of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of December 2004 had dispelled any lingering doubts about the common destiny of the peoples and countries of the region, as well as underscoring the urgent need to forge a strategic partnership in the region. With that in mind, the participants in the Asian-African Summit, held in Indonesia in April 2005, had adopted the Declaration on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership. The goals of the Declaration and of the zonal peace concept were similar, and the Declaration had brought a new sense of purpose and a new direction to the Committee's endeavours.

17. The Partnership would strive for greater multilateralism and a central role for the United Nations in global affairs and would lead to greater cooperation in the political, security, economic, social and cultural fields, as well as in trade, industry and a number of other areas. Effective cooperation would require capacity-building, development of human resources, technical assistance and joint efforts to mitigate natural disasters and would call for the involvement of all sectors of society. His delegation was convinced that the Committee could play a crucial role in ensuring that the Indian Ocean truly became a zone of peace and should continue to play that role until it had achieved its goals and fulfilled its mandate.

18. **Mr. Li** Song (China) expressed support for the efforts of the countries of the Indian Ocean region to maintain their sovereignty and independence and to develop constructive mutual relations. They should not seek to acquire armaments except to meet their legitimate defence requirements. He called on countries outside the region to withdraw their military presence and to refrain from any form of interference. Lastly, he emphasized the need for all the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the major Indian Ocean users, to participate in the work of the Committee.

19. **Mr. Milton** (Australia) said that the prospects for substantive work by the Committee, at least in the near future, remained poor. It was to be hoped that in the interests of strengthening regional cooperation and security, such work would commence in due course. However, until that time, the resources devoted to the Committee should remain limited.

Adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session
(A/AC.159/L.136)

20. **Mr. Randrianarivony** (Madagascar), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.136), explained that paragraphs 3 and 9 would be completed to reflect the statements made at the current meeting. He then read out the proposed language for paragraphs 11 and 12, which, if approved, would be inserted in the final version of the report.

21. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to adopt the report paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 10

22. *Paragraphs 1 to 10 were adopted.*

Paragraphs 11 and 12

23. *Paragraphs 11 and 12, as read out by the Rapporteur, were adopted.*

Paragraphs 13 to 16

24. *Paragraphs 13 to 16 were adopted.*

25. *The draft report as a whole was adopted.*

Closure of the session

26. **The Chairman** declared the 2005 session closed.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.